

Central West
LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORK
 RÉSEAU LOCAL D'INTÉGRATION DES SERVICES DE SANTÉ
 du Centre-Ouest

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July 9, 2009

Emil Kolb, Regional Chair
 Regional Municipality of Peel
 10 Peel Centre Drive, Suite A and B
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LEGISLATIVE SERVICES	
COPY TO:	FOR:
Chair	✓ Committee
CAO	✓
Corporate Services	Council
Environment, Transportation and Planning Services	
Employee and Business Services	Sept 10/09 G.C.
Finance	
Health Services	✓ File MOH ✓
Human Services	
Peel Living	

Dear Chair Kolb:

I wanted to thank you and all Members of Regional Council for participating in a dialogue with Mimi and I, and Bill MacLeod, CEO of the Mississauga Halton LHIN, at the June 25 Peel Regional Council meeting. We appreciated the direct and open nature of our discussion regarding emergency room wait times and other initiatives of the Central West Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) and the Mississauga Halton LHIN.

As noted in our discussion, the Central West Local Health Integration Network is examining emergency room wait times as a system-wide issue that cuts across the community from hospitals to homes to other health care providers. LHINs are uniquely placed to give leadership to this issue as we work with all the health care providers in the region and continue to put the issue of ER wait times at the top of the agenda. In fact, organizing community services and reducing wait times through good community based strategies is part of our accountability agreement with the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care and it is a responsibility our Board takes very seriously.

Critical to emergency room wait times is that all parts of the health care system must function well. To reduce ER wait times we must reduce the number of patients who remain in a hospital bed because there is no alternative supports in the community for that patient.

Community services need to be fully leveraged and integrated so they can support patients in a community setting and free up acute care beds for people who need to be hospitalized. Emergency rooms become waiting rooms as people wait for a hospital bed to become available.

That is one reason why the Central West LHIN Board is focusing on seniors in our community through the Aging at Home strategy which contains a number of initiatives including the Home at Last program. Aging at Home provides community support so seniors don't have to go to the ER in the first place. Home at Last provides community support so seniors can be discharged from the hospital with the appropriate community supports in place.

REFERRAL TO _____
 RECOMMENDED _____
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In both cases, patients who could receive an alternative level of care are identified so that they can be diverted from the hospital back to the community, quickly and safely. This will improve patient flow within the hospital and leave emergency departments able to handle acute health care needs while chronic care needs are left to the community.

Another important initiative is the Dedicated Offload Nursing Program that has been established to reduce paramedic offload delay times in emergency rooms so paramedics can return to serving the community. Central West LHIN staff will be meeting with Janette Smith in the next few weeks to review the impact of this pilot project.

We also continue to convene the Right Health Care Setting Action Group which undertakes performance monitoring, joint planning and strategy development. This group works across the local health care system so that we can build upon leading practices within the Central West LHIN regarding timely, appropriate care in the most suitable setting.

These are only a few of the initiatives we are undertaking to find ways to reduce emergency room wait times. Reducing wait times is a challenge faced by the entire health system. It's a complex issue that shows up at the point in the system where people feel it most – during the high anxiety and emotional time when they have to visit a hospital emergency room.

Sincerely,



Joe McReynolds
Board Chair



Mimi Lowi-Young
Chief Executive Officer